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INFORMATION REPORT

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PREPARED AND DISSEMINATED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

COUNTRY
Bulgaria

SUBJECT

Military Information in Turnovo Area

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SOURCE

1. The former 18th Etur Regiment no longer exists. Special companies consisting of young troops are now stationed in the barracks of the former regiment. These troops are trained and later assigned to other military units and new trainees take their place. The replacements of new troops are sometimes partial or complete.
2. The commander of one engineer company is Major Radichev, a Communist from Turnovo. He is a good officer but doesn't treat his troops well, a former partisan, and in 1950 he was sent for specialization probably to the USSR. The political commander is Captain Petkov, about 35 years old, a specialist in mine laying /military mine work/. During 1950 he was sent to Monchilgrad, but returned to Turnovo to train young troops. Radichev was commander of a special reconnaissance or intelligence company for student officers in Burgas during 1951.
3. Each company has two platoons and consists of 80 troops. Each company has 80 Mannlicher rifles, Soviet submachine guns of 72 rounds, Mg-34 light machine guns and Maksim Sekolov heavy machine guns, training mines, T-34 antitank mine, tank mine-42, antitroop mine F-35, and a vehicle mine /the word mina can both be a mine or a hand grenade/. Troops are acquainted with all types of antipersonnel mines or grenades and all types of explosives as well as with their effects. Troops are taught how to lay mine fields and how to destroy them.
4. In the barracks area there are buildings for engineer companies, motor companies, machine gun companies, antitank companies, weapons, dumps, a modern bakery, and equipment storehouses. There is a non-commissioned officers' infantry school. Here frontier troop students for non-commissioned officer cadre are assigned to several companies. After being trained, commanding groups are sent to various units. The training of young soldiers lasts up to six months.
5. The first frontier podelenie Iskur barracks in Malko Turnovo are located at the end of the city near the highway which goes to Lozenograd. The headquarters of the podelenie is located there /Lozenograd?/. The barracks house more than 200 old soldiers as well as four companies of young soldiers or trainees. Until 1950 the commander of the podelenie was Colonel Mikhayev but he was discharged and replaced by Major Khrustayev. D-106512

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He is 52, from Lambel, an active Communist who emigrated to the USSR during 1923. Lt Khriste Manev, is in charge of the reconnaissance or intelligence section. He is a Communist, about 40 years old and a former partisan. The old soldiers in the pedelenie are separated from the young ones. Ammunition is given to the old soldiers while the young ones are being trained.

6. Fear of the companies with young troops are infantry units. The pedelenie is equipped with light MG-42 and MG-34 machine guns, heavy Maksim Sokalov machine guns, Soviet submachine guns with 72 rounds, carbines, hand grenades, etc. The old soldiers are divided as follows: 20 machine gunners, 20 engineers, 20 mortar men, 10-15 drivers, three to five keepers of military dogs, 10 telephone operators, 10 telegraph operators. Also frontier troops are here, mostly those who have been punished at their duty places. They are assigned to the pedelenie for work and discipline.
7. The entire area surrounding the barracks of the pedelenie has trenches which are 100 m from the barracks. The main trenches are connected with the barracks by means of underground trenches. The open trenches are for firing and are .80 m wide so that two soldiers may pass each other comfortably while walking in opposite directions. Secret passages in the trenches are dug from inside. The trenches are constantly maintained in good shape and in readiness. In the barracks area there is a mine storage depot, located on the left angle of the barracks facing the frontier. Another mine storage depot or dump is located on the right of the Malko Turnovo Burgas road.
8. The Malko Turnovo-Losengrad road is mined with antitank mines which are 300 m from the frontier. The barracks of the sector are near the city, one air km from the frontier. On the ground they are further away from the frontier because the terrain is hilly. All bridges on the Malko Turnovo-Burgas and Malko Turnovo-Losengrad roads are so prepared that they can be blown up. On the highway to the frontier at inaccessible places, on the sides of the road itself there are little holes into which at a given moment explosives can be placed. Rocks can be blown up so that they fall on the highway as antitank obstacles.
9. The pedelenie is armed with the same weapons as the Kommandatura, which is at the headquarters of the pedelenie. The following kommandaturas are in this frontier sector: The kommandatura in Malko Turnovo, in Kosti, in Zvezdets, in Bela Tsurka [sic]. The Kommandatura in Malko Turnovo is located in the barracks of the headquarters of the pedelenie. It has 200 old soldiers and four infantry companies with young soldiers, probably recruits. Senior Lt Sokolov is the commander of the kommandatura, about 45 years old, very exacting and severe both as a man and as an officer. Jr Lt Gerasimov is a political commander. He is about 30 years old, comes from Dobruja and treats the soldiers badly. The kommandatura has many master sergeants (starshina - seltsebel) and other non-commissioned officers who are in charge of special groups such as machine gun and mortar groups. The kommandatura has 10 heavy Maksim Sokalov machine guns, and about 15 light MG-34 machine guns. Each soldier has a Maxim rifle or a Soviet carbine. There are several carbines and rifles in reserve. The kommandatura has four mortars, one radio station, telephone apparatus, hand grenades, mines, three well-trained dogs for use against illegal border crossers.
10. There are four frontier posts (granichni post). Each post has a special name, a commander and deputy commander, who are usually junior lieutenants or senior lieutenants but can also be master sergeants or other non-coms. Each post has 40-50 soldiers. A frontier soldier (granichen voynik) has the following weapons: A rifle or an automatic weapon, two hand grenades, one hundred cartridges, a telescope or binoculars, etc. Frontier troops are allowed to have on their persons rockets, signal devices, in case of emergency. They also have telephones to keep contact with the post and with the zastava.
11. During 1951 trudovaks began to build fortifications around the posts at the border. These are mainly bunkers with a diameter of eight meters fitted with six to 10 holes for shooting. The posts are connected with the bunkers by means of an underground secret passage. Each post is in charge of the area up to 10 km from the border, depending on the terrain

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Barbed wire is around many of the posts, as it is around the post which is just below Malko Turnovo. Here the barbed wire is in five rows, but only at accessible places.

12. The kommandatura in Kosti is 25 km from Malko Turnovo, on the road to Rezovo and 20 km from the border. The kommandatura is housed in new barracks built during 1951 at the end of the village. It has 200 soldiers, armed like the other kommandaturas in the Malko Turnovo area. The limits of this kommandatura begin at Malko Turnovo and go as far as Rezovo. At Rezovo the Burgas sector begins. This kommandatura has four to five frontier posts on the frontier line itself. There are no populated places here. Minefields are in certain places as is barbed wire but it cannot be stated exactly where.
13. The kommandatura in Zvezdets is 20 km from Malko Turnovo towards the interior of Bulgaria and eight km from the frontier. The highway Malko Turnovo - Burgas goes through the town of Zvezdets. The kommandatura is the same size as the previous kommandaturas. It has summer barracks and there are also barracks for the training of recruits. The troops which live in these barracks work on fortification of the frontier, but there are also labor troops (trudovaks) who work along the entire frontier sector of Malko Turnovo. This kommandatura has four frontier posts - one south of Zvezdets, a second on the right of Zvezdets, the third west of Belevren, and the fourth south of Granichar. The hills between Granichar and Belevren are called Golyana Mechka. Minefields are laid on these hills with S-35 antipersonnel mines. At other accessible points within the kommandatura area are barbed wire networks.
14. The kommandatura in Bela Tsurkza is the farthest in Malko Turnovo. Bela Tsurkza is 10 km from the frontier. This kommandatura resembles all the others mentioned previously.
15. A special type of troops called Chekisti are along the frontier. One battalion consisting of three companies is stationed now in Belogradchik, where the second frontier sector (granicchen sektor) is now stationed. This second granichen sector has been renamed etryad. These troops (the chekisti) are here for security purposes along the frontier and in the interior of Bulgaria. They are under the administration of the Ministry of Interior (State Security). Their uniforms are green and the caps have red piping. The chekists have unlimited authority over the "enemy of the people" and those who hide them. They are always armed with pistols but during their duty hours they have automatic weapons, hand grenades, rockets, and binoculars.
16. Special labor troops along the border clean up the terrain around the frontier lines of forests, stumps, and other road obstacles. This is to assure absolutely clear vision in the frontier area. These labor troops are not permanently stationed here. They receive their supplies from the kommandaturas or polklenies in which they work at the time.

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